

The 'joy before him' was principally eternal glory, for which end he apprehended us. That is not all; we are his crown, his joy, a church of holy believers: Isa. liii. 10, 11, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' A numerous seed, these are called his 'purchased possession,' Eph. i. 14. He had this in his eye as his crown and the reward of his sufferings: Ps. ii. 3, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession;' given him as a recompense of his humiliation.

This consideration giveth you a double advantage—

[1.] It assureth you of his willingness and readiness to assist and help you to the end of the race; for Christ will not lose his own crown, if believers be his crown and rejoicing.

[2.] Our Saviour Christ hath given an example of enduring the highest afflictions in this world. Of faith; he hath led us as a captain. Let us lay aside our worldly love, and fear and obey him, for he will be sure to crown all those that follow him.

SERMON X.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth toward those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.—PHIL. iii. 13, 14.

IN the words observe two things—

1. The imperfection acknowledged, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.'

2. His eager desire and endeavour after perfection asserted, 'But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth toward those things that are before.'

I begin with the first general branch, an humble acknowledgment of his imperfection renewed. He had said in the former verse 'Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect;' now he repeateth it again, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.'

This he saith for his own sake, and for the sake of the Philippians.

[1.] For his own sake; to keep himself humble, and solicitous about so much of his duty as was yet behind. The meaning is not, I am not yet in heaven. Who knoweth not that, or doubted of that? Surely that needeth not to be disclaimed by this double denial. Nor doth he mean thereby as if he had not a present right to eternal life. We have a right at conversion, but yet this right to salvation is not full till all be ended. It is continued and confirmed by our perseverance in well-

doing. Paul's meaning is, that though he had done and suffered many things for Christ, yet there were more labours and difficulties to be undergone. He had not done all which was necessary.

[2.] This he speaketh for the sake of the Philippians, to expel out of them that conceit of perfection which they might foster and cherish in themselves, as if, as soon as they were converted to the gospel, all danger were over, either of deceit by error, or defection in point of practice. No; he telleth them he had not that which they boasted of; he was not yet come to the goal; he needed to do and suffer more things before he could obtain the prize.

Doct. They that have made the furthest progress in christianity are usually most sensible of their own imperfections.

The reasons of the point.

1. In respect of grace.

[1.] Because as grace increaseth, light increaseth, and so they are more sensible of defects. Novices, who know little, are most apt to be puffed up: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.' A man newly acquainted with religion looketh but to few things, and his knowledge is very indistinct and imperfect; and therefore, looking not into the breadth of religion, they are conceited of those few obvious truths which they understand, as if they knew all that is necessary to be known; as smatterers in learning are most conceited of their learning, because they have not knowledge enough to discover their ignorance. Plutarch recorded the saying of one Manedemus, that young men when they came to study at Athens they were *σόφοι*; after they had studied a little more, only *φιλόσοφοι*; but the more they studied, *ρήτορες*, had some notions, could prattle of things, but not understand them; but afterwards found themselves *μῶροι*, fools; as they studied deeper in learning, they knew this only, that they knew nothing. So it is in spiritual things. Who more confident than young professors? But as their knowledge increaseth, they see every day more need of the apostle's direction, 'Be not wise in thine own conceit.' In a clear glass the least mote is soon espied. They discern many remainders of pride, hypocrisy, worldliness, besides their latent corruptions, which they knew not before; and their hasty confidence is soon routed, and they see a need of establishing themselves in the hope of the gospel upon surer terms.

[2.] As grace increaseth, their love to God is increased, and so they hate sin more. Love begets a tenderness; as the spiritual life increaseth, so doth spiritual sense. The least sin goeth to their very souls, which maketh them to think viler of themselves than ever before. We have but a gross sense of sin at first, because we know but a few things, prize ourselves by some sensitive expressions of love to God, or external conformity to his laws; but as we look into the breadth of the commandment, make conscience of a thorough conformity to the will of God, we are more sensible how much we come short of that purity, and holiness, and exactness which the law of God requireth, and do more sorely and bitterly complain of the relics of sin dwelling in us: Rom. vii. 18, 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how

to perform that which is good, I find not ;' and ver. 24, 'O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?' The increase of light showeth sin to be more than we thought it to be, and the increase of love maketh it to be more a burden to us. Look, as in the body, the better the constitution, the more sensible of pain ; so in the soul, the more thoroughly the heart is set to please God, the more grievous is sin to them.

[3.] The longer they live, the more experience they have, and that maketh them wise and provident, that they are not so confident and venturous as others ; they have more experience of the craft and subtlety of Satan, who easily surpriseth unwary souls : 2 Cor. ii. 11, 'Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' They know the rocks upon which they are apt to split themselves ; what advantage he maketh of their passions and affections, and not only of their natural and carnal affections, but sometimes of their religious affections. If they will be sorry for sin, he will tempt them to an over-grief, that they may be swallowed up of sorrow. He would turn their zeal to a furious zeal, that it shall exceed the measure of the cause, or offend in its object. How is a child of God or a disciple of Christ sometimes made Satan's instrument ? Mat. xvi. 23, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Therefore these things make them more wary and watchful than younger christians, who fall as a ready prey into the mouth of the tempter.

2. Because of the world. This flattering tempting world, whose delights often tempt them from God, holiness, and heaven, they have proved it, and tried it to be 'vanity and vexation of spirit' at the last. When the apostle had differenced christians by their several ages and degrees of growth, he adviseth all, 1 John ii. 15, 16, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' All christians must take heed of the world, but none are so likely to do so as those that have smarted for their carnal complacency. They find that the world is more an enemy when it smileth than when it frowneth ; that the profits of it are a greater snare than the losses, the pleasure than the pains, and the honours than the disgraces ; that the pomp and vanities of the world do easily tempt them to forget God and their souls, death and judgment, heaven and hell. The seasoned christian will be more humble and watchful than the inexperienced.

3. Because of themselves ; the longer they live, the more they are acquainted with themselves. You would think it strange that two men should intimately converse together for twenty, or thirty, or forty years, and all this while should not know one another. But it is much more strange that a man should live so long and not know himself, not know his own heart. Too frequently is this so, because most men fly themselves, shun themselves, run away from themselves, never commune with their own hearts. But you cannot imagine a man to be godly and serious, but he will use frequent observation, and 'ponder the path of his feet,' Prov. iv. 26 ; and as one that hath eyes in his head will consider what he doth, and that upon every weighty matter

he will use self-communings, and self-reflections: Ps. iv. 4, 'Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own hearts upon your beds, and be still.' His duties will often call upon him to examine himself, if he goeth about them conscientiously: 1 Cor. xi. 28, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup.' If he omitteth it, God will remember him by many a sharp providence, and put him necessarily upon an inquiry into his state and ways: Lam. iii. 4, 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn to the Lord.' Surely this is a duty necessary, and upon solemn occasions indispensable. Now can a man be observant of his course, and seriously examine and consider what he has been before conversion, what he is after grace received, how much he cometh short of his obligations to God, of his advantages by Christ; how much he liveth beneath the provisions appointed for his growth and increase, and beneath the worth and weight of endless glory which he hopeth for; but he must be base in his own eyes, and have a higher sense of his sinfulness than others have, and so bemoan and bewail himself for his defects, and see that he hath not attained to the height of perfection which christians should aim at?

4. By frequent commerce with God they know more of God, and so more of themselves. A godly man hath much to do with that majesty and perfection which continually aweth him, and keepeth him humble: Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' When he had an apparition of God, it affected him more than all the hearsay knowledge which he had of God before. We see our wants in God's fulness; the ocean maketh us ashamed of our drop. We see our vileness in God's majesty; what is the balance-dust to the great mountain, our impurity and sinfulness to God's holiness, our nothingness to his all-sufficiency? All the creatures are nothing but what God maketh them, and continueth them to be every moment. In his supremacy and dominion we see the right that he hath in us to command us as he pleaseth, and so may condemn ourselves for our non-subjection to him. In his beneficence and goodness, we understand more of our obligation to him: the more we think of his majesty and greatness, every service we perform seemeth low and mean; we cannot satisfy ourselves in it, as being much beneath the greatness of God. Certainly sin is more grievous to every one that hath seen God, 3 John 11. Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle when God's glory passed before him, 1 Kings xix. 13, and Isaiah crieth out, 'Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of polluted lips, and I dwell among a people of polluted lips,' Isa. vi. 5. The more large and comprehensive thoughts we have of God, the more shall we humble ourselves for our own imperfection.

5. Their estate being changed, their work is now to look to the degree. You know, besides the gate in christianity, there is the way. If you have entered the gate, you must see that you walk in the way. Besides making covenant with God, there is keeping covenant with God: Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies;' Ps. ciii. 18, 'To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments

to do them.' Well, then, though we may be comforted that we have entered into covenant with God, yet in keeping covenant we are conscious to many failings, and the covenant is not fully kept till life be ended. All is not done when men have begun a religious life. Many fall off who seemed to have good beginnings. It is one thing to be planted into Christ, another to bring forth fruit with patience. If there were more close walking, the holy life would be a feast and pleasure to us, but by our weaknesses and infirmities we often interrupt the comfort of it. Now good men are troubled that they walk with no more accurateness and resolvedness in the narrow way; that though they have consented to the covenant, yet they do so weakly fulfil their covenant vow; that though married to Christ, they bring forth no more glory to God; that their course doth no more suit with their choice; at least while their pilgrimage is continued, they see a need of constant caution and solicitude.

Use 1. To teach us that growth in grace, and an increase of humility, or a low esteem of ourselves do usually go together. The laden boughs do most hang their heads, and the sun at the highest casts the least shadow. The conceited seem to have more grace than the real christian, but have indeed less; as swollen flesh is to appearance bigger and stronger, but it is not sound; it is their humour, not their growth. Most men are too great and too good in their own eyes. Self-love representeth ourselves in a false shape and feigned likeness, much more wise, and holy, and righteous than we are. Whereas the most serious, and they that most mind their business, humble themselves even to the dust; as Agur did: Prov. xxx. 2, 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of a man.' And Paul calleth himself 'the least of the apostles,' 1 Cor. xv. 9; the least of saints, Eph. iii. 8, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.' The chiefest of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Of whom I am the chief.' Oh what a difference is there between them and the carnal professor! They loathe other men's sins rather than their own, extenuate other men's gifts and graces, and extol and cry up their own; but true humility sits in the dust as in its own proper place. Only here is a doubt: How can God's children say so in truth? For we must not lie for humility's sake; that is to personate and act a part. There is a threefold judgment, of verity, charity, and sense. First, the judgment of verity is exact. So we are to search and try ourselves to the uttermost, to pry into all the aggravating circumstances: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?' Out of a sense of their obligation to God, and deep displeasure against sin; none can charge others as the godly will charge themselves. Secondly, there is a judgment of charity, which 'hopeth all things,' as long as possibly it can, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Charity teacheth us to hope the best of others, for it is a favourable judgment. They may be better than we know, or they may have more to excuse them than we know of, as being more violently tempted, or have not such means to prevent sin. Certainly, charity forbiddeth us to pry into or aggravate their failings 'For love covereth a multitude of sins,' Prov. x. 12. And, thirdly, there is the judgment of sense and experience. We are con-

scious to our own infirmities more than we can be to others. We have a sense of our own sins, which being compared with that remote view which we have of the sins of others, will make us more condemn ourselves than them. We know our own hearts; we know not another's. We know our own infirmities by experience, others only by speculation. A man that hath the toothache feeleth his own pain, not that of another man's, therefore judgeth his own greater; or they that are troubled with a sharp disease think no grief or pain like theirs.

Use 2. Let us be sensible of our imperfection, and take notice of our defects for caution and humiliation.

1. In point of knowledge: Prov. xxvi. 12, 'Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.' As he said of learning, Many had come to learning, if they had not conceited themselves learned already; so many had attained more perfect knowledge of the ways of God, if they were not blinded by their own prejudices and self-conceit, and their preconceptions. If we had a true sense of our own imperfection, we would not refuse to yield anything we had taken a liking to, if afterwards it were disproved by apparent and clear light; but dogmatising, especially in doubtful points, hath much divided the christian world.

2. In point of daily practice.

[1.] As to the humble and broken-hearted, suing out the pardon of sin: John xiii. 10, 'Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet;' that is, to cleanse himself from his daily defilements; as a man under the law, if he had touched any unclean thing, was to wash his clothes before even. We are not to sleep and lie down in our sins, upon any pretence of our former justification, as if errors would be pardoned of course, without such running to our advocate, as there was to be a morning and evening sacrifice.

[2.] As to caution and watchfulness, as if quite out of harm's way, and we might play with temptations to sin, and no harm come of it. No; this playing at the cockatrice-hole will cost us dear: Mark iii. 37, 'And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.'

3. In point of perseverance, as if we might rest in former doing and suffering for Christ: Ezek. xxxiii. 13, 'If he trust in his righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered;' that is, if he presume upon his good estate so as voluntarily and deliberately to fall into sin; if we think our profession shall excuse us in our covetousness, or our countenancing the ways of God in our oppressions, or our praying atone for our sensuality. Man is very apt to make one part of his life a recompense for another, and to excuse his defect in some duties by exceeding in others. The indulgence is sometimes antedated, and we sin upon a presumption we will afterwards repent of it. Sometimes it is postdated; because we have done thus and thus for God, we think God will not be severe to us, but spare us for such a good service or property we think to be in us. Oh, no! you must persevere in a constant, uniform, and self-denying obedience: or think, I am a child of God; as if that would bear us out in sin.

Secondly, He asserts his endeavour after perfection.

Wherein observe—

¹ Qu. 'not'?—E9.

1. The thing pursued after, 'The prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.'

2. The manner of his pursuit—

[1.] By fixing his end; for he calleth it *σκόπου*, his mark or scope.

[2.] By seriousness, making it his business, 'This one thing I do;' I wholly mind this.

[3.] The earnestness of his pursuit, showed in his diligence and perseverance.

(1.) His diligence, 'I press toward it.'

(2.) His perseverance, 'Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before.'

1. The thing pursued after, *τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως*, 'the prize of the high calling.' The thing pursued after was salvation by Christ, or heavenly glory, which is set forth by the worth of it; it is *βραβεῖον*, 'a prize,' such as will countervail our endeavours in the race.

2. The hopes of obtaining it, 'The high calling of God in Jesus Christ.' We are invited to these hopes by the effectual call of God: 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'Walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.' And this call is given us upon the account of Christ, who hath purchased this favour for us, and opened this hope to us in the promises of the gospel; therefore also called 'his calling,' Eph. i. 18, 'That you may know what is the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints.' By 'his calling' he openeth a large door of hope to us, and inviteth us to partake of this rich and glorious reward. Yea, by this calling, as it ends in conversion, he qualifyeth and fitteth us for the participation of it. Calling, as it respects the offer of the word, so it inviteth us; as it respects the powerful and sanctifying operation of the Spirit, so it prepareth and fitteth us for it.

Doct. That the prize of eternal glory is set before those whom God hath effectually called in Christ.

1. There is a twofold calling, outward and inward.

[1.] Outward and external, when a man is by the word invited to the communion of Christ and all his benefits: so 'Many are called but few are chosen,' Mat. xxii. 14.

[2.] Inwardly, when a man is by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost actually translated and brought into this fellowship and communion: 1 Cor. i. 9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.' These two are so distinct, that a man may have the one without the other, the external without the internal; but the inward call is by the outward, and he that slighteth the outward cannot well expect the inward. Some have only heard the invitation of the gospel, but obeyed it not: Mat. xxii. 3, 'He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, but they would not come.' To these God offereth heaven, but to these he will not give heaven, for he will save none against their will, nor without their consent. Some seem to comply with the external invitation, but yet are not effectually called, as the man that came to the marriage-feast without a wedding-garment, Mat. xxii. 11. But those have not the prize, for God is not deceived with shows; but those that mind the message, choose the happiness offered for their

portion, pursue after it with all diligence and perseverance, in short, turn to God with all their hearts and souls, these are the called, that 'receive the promise of the eternal inheritance,' Heb. ix. 15.

2. In this calling God in Christ hath the greatest hand ; it is termed in the text *ἡ ἄνω κλήσις*, 'the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' This calling is from above, that is, from heaven. The grace cometh from above ; it hath its rise from the Lord's goodness and compassion, and is conveyed to us by the merits of Christ through the power of the Spirit ; certainly it hath not its rise from man. Yea, the external call may be said to be from above. In Paul's instance especially ; Christ called to him from heaven : Acts ix. 4, 'He heard a voice from heaven, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?' Yea, the ordinary call of every christian is in a sense from above ; with respect to the original authority, the voice is from heaven : Heb. xii. 25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven.' He speaketh to you by his word in the mouth of his messengers ; but he in whose name and authority this message is brought, and by whose power it is made effectual, is in heaven.

3. The nature of this calling. Three things are considerable in it —(1.) The work of God ; (2.) The duty of man ; (3.) The benefits following on both.

[1.] The work of God (for he beginneth) is his giving grace by his divine power, whereby the heart of man is changed and sanctified, and turned to himself. God by his call giveth a real being to things which were not before : Rom. iv. 17, 'He calleth the things that are not as though they were.' *Verba Dei sunt opera*—God's words are works. As in the first creation he called for those things to appear which lay in the dark womb of nothing, and they presently came forth : 'Let there be light, and there was light ;' so of graceless he maketh us holy and gracious, of enemies to become friends, of self-lovers to be lovers of God. He bringeth light out of darkness : 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' This is the act of God's great power and grace whereby he freely prevents man ; and if he did not prevent him, he would be for ever miserable ; for we have neither ears to hear God's call, nor a heart to turn to him. Yet his call to the deaf is not in vain ; for he giveth ears to hear, and quickens our dead hearts. It is past man's skill to change himself, but not above the great power and mercy of God.

[2.] The duty of man is to be obedient to the heavenly call ; for besides God's invitation, there is man's acceptation. God calleth us to Christ as the only remedy for our lost souls, and we receive him by faith : John i. 12, 'To as many as received him.' God calleth to repentance : Mat. ix. 13, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' And we consent to return to God : Jer. iii. 22, 'Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.' God calleth to obedience, and we say, Ps. xl. 8, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' It is fulfilled in christians as well as in Christ. God calls to communion with himself in holy worship : Ps. xxvii. 8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face ; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, O Lord,

will I seek.' God no sooner calleth but they hear; and what God biddeth them do they do, and forsake they forsake. To many God stretcheth out his hands in vain; God calleth them to purity, but oh, the uncleanness of heart and life! God looketh for grapes, but behold wild grapes. But where God inclineth the heart, they obey his call, though it be to mortify their dearest lusts, to cast away their beloved transgressions, to part with anything rather than part with their God and their Christ. When God called Paul, he made an absolute resignation of himself: Acts ix. 6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' ready to go where God will lead him, to do what God will have him.

[3.] The benefit flowing upon both. There followeth a great change, both in the disposition and condition of the man called. As to his disposition, he is made of unholy, holy. As to his condition, of miserable, he is made happy. Two attributes are given to effectual calling; it is a holy calling and a heavenly calling: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' Heb. iii. 1, 'Wherefore, brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.'

(1.) As to his disposition, the man is powerfully changed, and there is a plain alteration to be found in him; before sinful, now made holy, 'called to be saints,' 1 Cor. i. 2; 1 Peter i. 15, 16, 'As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy as I am holy.' We are called out of a state of sin into a state of holiness. God who hath called us is holy, and he calleth us into communion with himself in holiness; and the calling itself is the setting us apart from a common to a holy use; and the grace and favour showed in our calling, obligeth us to holiness. When we consider in what a sinful estate God found us, how freely he loved us, with how great mercy he called us, passing by others worthier than ourselves, we cannot be so unthankful as to deny obedience to his holy will: Eph. iv. 1, 'Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.' Especially the honour of him that calleth us being concerned: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'That we should be to the praise of him who hath called us.' In short, your calling giveth you great advantages of being holy, a principle or nature in part healed: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.' A holy and perfect rule: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the whole Israel of God.' A pure reward: 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him; purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' The assistance of the Holy Spirit: Heb. xiii. 21, 'Make you perfect in every good work, working in you what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Ordinances: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them by the truth; thy word is truth.' Providences: Heb. xii. 10, 'They verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Now all these things considered, it is a holy calling.

(2.) Their condition is altered; of miserable he is made happy. The great end of our calling is eternal glory: 2 Thes. ii. 14, 'Whereunto he hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' That is the end and ultimate effect of it:

1 Peter v. 10, 'The God of all grace, who hath called you to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' The miserable estate out of which, the blessed estate into which we are called, should deeply affect us. For the present he is an heir of glory, and in due time he shall be translated into the heavenly kingdom. We receive some part of this happiness here, in our justification and adoption, but the great and chief part is not given us in present possession, but reserved in heaven for us, 2 Peter i. 4.

Use. If there be such a prize set before us in effectual calling, then all good christians should look upon themselves as deeply engaged to pursue after it—

1. In respect of the invitation of the external call, that we may not disobey God's call, and neglect this preventing grace, whereby God would draw us to himself. Your sin will be more heinous than the sin of others who were never called. God beggeth for entrance, he standeth at your doors, but you deny entrance to him: Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man open to me, I will come in and sup with him.' Christ will bring his entertainment with him, and he knocketh that you may give entrance; he knocketh by the word; he knocketh by his providence, mercies, and afflictions; he knocketh by the motions of his Spirit. Men are a little roused, begin to hearken; conscience stirs a little, yet lie down to sleep again. But God knocketh again, and they are more awakened, and have some affections and desires after heavenly things; but these are choked by the cares of the world, and voluptuous living. Therefore God cometh a third, yea, many a time, and giveth them further calling, that maketh them startle, and awaken a little more; but if they return to their old lusts, and negligent way of living, he may justly give them over to a spirit of deep sleep, to that blindness and wilfulness, that they may be sealed up to eternal condemnation, because they love darkness more than light, a base dirty world before the glory and blessedness promised by Christ. There are thousands, yea, millions in the world, who have not had such an outward powerful call, nor an offer of heaven so importunately urged upon them. Oh, how great is their ingratitude who have offer upon offer, and motions and convictions, but outgrow all feelings of conscience! You judge it disobedience and rebellion in a servant, if called again and again, and yet he will not come; how shall God judge it otherwise if you harden your hearts and will not hear his voice? Certainly your punishment will be more grievous than that of others: Prov. i. 24–26, 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would not turn at my reproof: I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.' When death cometh, you will only serve for a warning to others not to make bold with God. In the anguish of your souls God will not hear you.

2. To show whether the calling hath had its effect upon you. Doth it make you more heavenly? They that obey this call, their hearts are more heavenly. It is heaven they seek: Col. iii. 1, 2, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ

sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth.' It is heaven they hope for : 1 Peter i. 3, 'Blessed be God, who hath begotten us to a lively hope.' Heavenly things they savour : Rom. viii. 5, 'They that are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.' This is their treasure and portion : Mat. xx. 21, 'Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.' Their home and happiness : Heb. xi. 13, 'They declare plainly they seek a country.' It is their scope : 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen.' And therefore are heavenly : Phil. iii. 20, 'Our conversation is in heaven.' Their course is becoming their choice : 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'That you walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.' They live as heirs of glory. Heaven they seek in the first place : Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God.' Their conversation, hope, and happiness is in heaven. But when you are of the earth, and savour of the earth, you are not yet called off from the world. Certainly when grace gets the mastery, when it is the governing principle in our hearts, it sets up some scope and end which was not before, for which it employeth our time and strength, life and love, minds and hearts, cares and endeavours. A carnal mind is carried out with greater estimation, resolution, and delight after earthly things than after heavenly ; but these are the proper good suited to the divine nature in us. In heaven is the most perfect enjoyment of God and conformity to him. Being born of God, they cannot live without him, nor be satisfied with that partial enjoyment which the present world will only afford. There is the consummation of the new creature.

3. The calling of God gives us hopes of a right to the blessing : 'No man taketh this honour, but he that is called of God ;' and of the continuance of that right : 1 Peter v. 10, 'But the God of all grace, who hath called us to this eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' If you have consented to his holy calling, he will not leave till he hath brought you to the full possession of what he hath called you unto.

SERMON XI.

I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.—PHIL. iii. 14.

HAVING spoken of the thing pursued after, we come now to the second branch, the manner of prosecution. Where, the first thing observable is his fixing his scope. He propounded this 'prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ' as his mark and scope which he aimed at, 'I press toward the mark.'

Doct. 1. That those that would be christians indeed must make heavenly things their scope.

First, Let me show you how many ways this is done—(1.) Habitually ; (2.) Actually.